UNITED
NATIONS

S

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/22136
23 January 1991

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 22 JANUARY 1991 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BOTSWANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to enclose herewith text of the statement issued by the Government of the Republic of Botswana on the outbreak of hostilities in the Persian Gulf. I should be grateful if this letter, along with its enclosure, could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Legwaila J. M. J. LEGWAILA
Ambassador/Permanent Representative

Encl.

Annex

Press statement issued on 16 January 1991 by Botswana on the Gulf crisis

All Batswana must be aware by now of the crisis that has been looming in the Gulf since Iraq invaded the neighbouring State of Kuwait on 2 August 1990 and annexed it as part of its territory.

Since the invasion, the United Nations Security Council has adopted a number of resolutions aimed at forcing Iraq to withdraw its troops from the Emirate. The last of these resolutions, resolution 678 (1990), gave Iraq a deadline of 15 January 1991 to withdraw peacefully without any pre-conditions or face the likelihood of forced withdrawal at the hands of countries co-operating with Kuwait.

Concomitant with the actions of the United Nations Security Council, efforts were made by some countries, organizations and individuals to try to resolve the crisis peacefully by diplomatic means. The latest of these efforts was the visit of the United Nations Secretary-General to Baghdad just two days ago.

Unfortunately, all these efforts seem to have failed to bring about a peaceful resolution of the problem. Although the very latest news on this subject is that the French Government is making yet another last-minute effort to seek a diplomatic solution to the problem, there is no guarantee that it will succeed.

The conclusion of the Department of External Affairs under the circumstances is that there is a high probability that war will break out in the Gulf on or after the deadline of 15 January set by the United Nations Security Council. In that event, Botswana and Batswana in general are likely to suffer direct and indirect harm as a result of the conflict. As a developing country dependent on imported oil, we can be certain that a sharp rise in the oil price will seriously affect the health of our economy, as indeed has already happened to some extent since the invasion.

For the general public, the Department would like to warn all Batswana to avoid travelling to the Gulf during this period if they can help it as there is nothing that Government can do to assist or protect them should they find themselves in difficulty while there.

This is an uncertain period in international relations. Botswana has condemned Iraq for its disregard of international law by invading a small and peaceful Member of the United Nations Organization. War always has terrible consequences and should be avoided at all costs. The Department deeply regrets the turn that events seem to be taking in regard to this crisis.

It is to be hoped that whatever difficulties there are for each of the directly concerned parties, reason will prevail in the end so that the people of the Middle East in particular and humanity in general could be spared the miseries of another war.

Department of External Affairs
Gaborone